

# 'No Defense' Against A-Bomb, Groves Warns

Houston 11/29/45

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WASHINGTON, Nov. 28.—(Sp)—The man who directed the construction of mankind's most awesome weapon said flatly Wednesday there is no defense against it and no encouragement of any defense being perfected at any time soon.

"No encouragement, period," he reiterated.

He is Maj. Gen. L. R. Groves, head of the Manhattan engineers project of the war department, which developed the atomic bomb.

A big man, calm but emphatic of speech, General Groves gave his views on atomic bombs and atomic energy to the special committee of United States senators who are studying the problem of what to do with atomic energy, now that we have it, and how it may become a blessing, rather than a scourge.

Senate committee hearings come and go, but tomorrow's historian, if the world has a tomorrow, will deem this one the most important ever conducted. The 11 senators will not, of course, have the final say on atomic energy, but their recommendations almost certainly will have great weight with their colleagues of Congress.

The 11 men who have assumed the responsibility for the recommendations are Brien McMahon of Connecticut, chairman; Tom Connally of Texas, Millard E. Tydings of Maryland, Warren R. Austin of Vermont, Arthur Vandenberg of Michigan, Edwin C. Johnson of Colorado, Harry F. Byrd of Virginia, Thomas C. Hart of Connecticut, Eugene D. Millikan of Colorado, Bourke B. Hickenlooper of Iowa and Richard B. Russell of Georgia.

There are both Democrats and Republicans among them, but the study is strictly non-partisan. The feeling is that an enemy's atomic bombs would wipe out Democrats and Republicans alike.

The trappings of big time Senate hearings were present in the committee room. Motion picture and still photographers recorded the scene in pictures. Two or three dozen news reporters and special writers described it for the world's press. So far there has been scant levity. No one sees anything funny in the atomic bomb, and less so after General Groves gave his testimony.

He spoke for nearly two hours. First he read a prepared statement in which he urged the establishment of a special commission to control further development of atomic energy and then he answered questions from the senators at their raised U-shaped committee desk.

He retold the story of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. There were between 15,000 and 120,000 killed at Hiroshima and between 75,000 and 200,000 injured. Nagasaki's toll was between 40,000 and 45,000 killed and approximately 40,000 injured. The destruction in the bomb area was complete; nothing lived and scarcely anything stood after the two detonations.

## Apt Illustration

The Pentagon building, world's largest, made apt illustration for the Washington-minded senators. Drop one bomb in the center and there would be no more Pentagon, General Groves said. If one were dropped in the heart of the government building area of the city, only a few unusable walls would be left, he added.

Senator Austin brought up the question of radioactivity remaining at the scene of the explosions, to injure rescue workers. "There is none, and that is a very positive none," General Groves replied. Adding that for best effect the bombs are exploded in the air, and for that reason none remains. When the first test bomb was exploded at 100 feet in the air in New Mexico, he continued, there was residual radioactivity for a time, but it was not serious.

"But I wouldn't care to sit down and make my home there," he added, provoking one of the few laughs of the day.

## Cow Hair Stories

The senators inquired about news stories that the hair of some cows had turned gray.

"The cows had gray hair," he admitted, "but that was the only effect."

The general said that those who tested the bomb were most impressed by the great light of the explosion. They were, he said, dumbfounded by it. Observers 27 miles away who forgot in their excitement to don welders' helmets were blinded for two or three seconds by it. The general himself lay on the ground, face downward, 10 miles from the explosion and turned to watch it through dark glasses a fraction of a second after the detonation.

At this point he was asked whether he thought the bomb was the deciding factor in the defeat of Japan.

"I think Japan lost the war at the battle of Midway," he replied, "but the people didn't know it."

## General Unimpressed

General Groves seemed to be unimpressed by proposals to control the manufacture of atomic bombs by an international inspection force. He pointed out some of the difficulties, as he saw it, by saying that every factory and every home over the world would have to be subject to thorough inspection at any time. Business secrets, therefore, would be open to inspection by inspectors primarily loyal to other countries.

Peacetime uses and war uses of atomic energy cannot be separated, he said. Plants producing peacetime atomic energy could be changed over to war use in a few minutes.

Senator Hickenlooper asked the question on whether there is any encouragement that a defense will be perfected in the reasonable future. "I know of none, unless you can stop the carrying vehicle," General Groves replied. "And it isn't sufficient to stop some of them. You could detonate them with high-powered anti-aircraft. But some would get through."

## 'No Encouragement'

"So there is no encouragement, period?" Senator Vandenberg asked.

"No encouragement, period," General Groves agreed.

The question of what would happen if an enemy attacked this country first with atomic bombs came up.

General Groves said he did not think it would be a "push button" war, but that this country would suffer severely in the early stages. It then would be up to us, he said in effect, to shower the enemy with more bombs.

Continued development of atomic energy under government supervision is essential to avoid national suicide, he said.

The hearing will continue Thursday, with Dr. Harold Urey of the University of Chicago, winner of the Nobel prize for physics in 1933, as witness.